

## Message Text

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41

ACTION SCCT-01

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00

SY-05 USSS-00 SCSE-00 SCA-01 SAM-01 OPR-02 CIAE-00

DODE-00 NSAE-00 USIE-00 PA-02 PRS-01 AGR-10 EB-07

IO-10 /063 W

----- 036131

O 121235Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5285

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

USIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS BEIRUT 8868

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS CASC (MORGAN, ERNEST R.)

SUBJECT: PRESS COVERAGE OF ABDUCTION OF COL. MORGAN

1. SUMMARY. JULY 12 LOCAL PRESS COVERAGE OF MORGAN ABDUCTION CONCENTRATES ON REPORTED "LEBANESE FORMULA" TO EFFECT COL. MORGAN'S RELEASE BY ARRANGING SELECTIVE DISTRIBUTION OF SUPPLIES TO MASLAKH AREA AND PAYMENT OF ONE MILLION LEBANESE POUNDS INTO SPECIAL BANK ACCOUNT. MOST PAPERS, INCLUDING ALL LEFTIST ONES, ALLEGE THESE ARRANGEMENTS HAVE IMPLICIT, IF NOT EXPLICIT, APPROVAL OF AMEMBASSY. SOME PAPERS GO SO FAR AS TO CLAIM THAT LEBANESE EMPLOYEE OF AMEMBASSY VISITED REJECTION FRONT OFFICE TO MAKE FINAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR COL. MORGAN'S RELEASE. MANY PAPERS ALSO QUOTE PFLP/GC SPOKESMAN AS SAYING THAT AMEMBASSY HAS GIVEN PROOF OF GOOD INTENTIONS BY BEGINNING DELIVERIES OF SUPPLIES, AS WELL AS MASLAKH POPULAR COMMITTEE'S STATEMENT REJECTING "AMERICAN RANSOM". DESCRIBING POSSIBLE "SYRIAN FORMULA", L'OREINT-LE JOUR REPORTS COL. MORGAN MAY ALREADY BE IN DAMASCUS, BUT MANY PAPERS CARRY SA'IQA DENIAL THAT SARG IS ANY WAY

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INVOLVED. SEVERAL PAPERS QUOTE ZUHAIR MUHSIN'S STRONG

CONDEMNATION OF MORGAN KIDNAPPING, WHILE DAILY STAR REPEATS REJECTION FRONT'S CRITICISM OF PLO FOR "WANTING TO ESTABLISH GOOD RELATIONS WITH U.S. THROUGH MORGAN CASE." END SUMMARY.

2. IN REPORTING "LEBANESE FORMULA" TO EFFECT COL. MORGAN'S RELEASE BY ARRANGING SELECTIVE DISTRIBUTION OF SUPPLIES TO MASLAKH AREA AND PAYMENT OF ONE MILLION LEBANESE POUNDS INTO SPECIAL BANK ACCOUNT, FOUR INDEPENDENT AND CONSERVATIVE PAPERS ACCEPT THIS FORMULA AS STRICTLY LEBANESE. LEADING INDEPENDENT "AN-NAHAR": "DISTRIBUTION WAS PART OF SETTLEMENT FORMULA ARRIVED AT IN SECRET NEGOTIATIONS IN WHICH NUMEROUS PARTIES, INCLUDING SENIOR LEBANESE OFFICIAL, PROMINENT LEBANESE BUSINESSMAN, INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN PERSONALITIES, AND NON-PLO COMMANDO OFFICIAL, PARTICIPATED. IN ACCORDANCE WITH THIS FORMULA, IT IS ASSUMED THAT KIDNAPPERS WILL RELEASE KIDNAPPED COLONEL BEFORE 9 P.M. THIS EVENING." CONSERVATIVE PRO-SAUDI "AL-HAYAT": "IT WAS NATURAL THAT SETTLEMENT EFFORTS SHOULD REACH ... COMPROMISE SOLUTION A LA LIBANAISE. IT WAS AGREED THAT NATIONAL COMMISSION ... WOULD ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR MATTER IN LIEU OF AMEMBASSY, BUT WITHOUT REVEALING THIS OFFICIALLY." LEADING PRO-EGYPTIAN "AL-ANWAR" AND PHALANGE PARTY ORGAN "AL-'AMAL" PRINT SIMILAR REPORTS.

3. IN SPITE OF STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S WIDELY REPORTED STATEMENT THAT U.S. HAD NO PART IN DISTRIBUTING FOOD TO MASLAKH AMEMBASSY BEIRUT'S STATEMENT TO SAME EFFECT, AND "SENIOR OFFICIAL'S" STATEMENT FROM BONN THAT U.S. WILL NOT CARRY OUT KIDNAPPERS' DEMANDS, MOST PAPERS, AND ESPECIALLY LEFTIST ONES, ALLEGE THAT "LEBANESE SOLUTION" HAS IMPLICIT, IF NOT EXPLICIT, APPROVAL OF AMEMBASSY. THIS IS WORKING ASSUMPTION OF PFLP/GC SPOKESMAN ABU AL-'ABBAS, WHOM SEVERAL PAPERS QUOTE AS SAYING: "AMEMBASSY HAS GIVEN PROOF OF ITS GOOD INTENTIONS BY DELIVERING QUANTITIES OF FOOD REQUESTED FOR INHABITANTS OF MASLAKH. I HAVE LEARNED THAT REVOLUTIONARY ORGANIZATION THAT IS HOLDING MORGAN IS PREPARED TO TURN HIM OVER WHEN EMBASSY COMPLETES FULFILLMENT OF REST OF CONDITIONS. THIS IS EXPECTED TO OCCUR WITHIN FEW HOURS." UNCLASSIFIED

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IT IS ALSO WORKING ASSUMPTION OF "POPULAR COMMITTEE OF MASLAKH QUARTER", WHOM WWAFA QUOTES AS SAYING: "SOME GROUPS TRIED THIS AFTERNOON TO DISTRIBUTE 10 TONS OF SUGAR AND RICE TO MASLAKH MASSES AS RANSOM FOR COL. MORGAN... COMMITTEE HAS DECIDED TO ... EXPRESS ITS REJECTION OF ANY AMERICAN RANSOM AND ITS INSISTENCE UPON AND COMMITMENT TO SLOGANS AND ATTITUDES OF PLO.... POOR MASSES OF MASLAKH REJECT AMERICA'S BOUTY. THEIR FIRST AND FUNDAMENTAL

NEED IS FOR ARMS."

4. COVERAGE OF PRO-IRAQ "BEIRUT" IS TYPICAL OF REPORTING OF LEFTIST PAPERS: "IT HAS BECOME LIKELY THAT AMERICAN COL. MORGAN WILL BE FREED IN FIRST HOURS OF SATURDAY FOLLOWING FINAL CONCLUSION OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN AMEMBASSY AND SOME MEDIATORS ACCORDING TO WHICH HE WILL BE FREED IN EXCHANGE FOR PROVISION OF 30 TONS OF SUGAR, RICE, AND FLOUR TO MASLAKH AREA AND DEPOSIT OF ONE MILLION POUNDS IN A BANK IN NAME OF ONE OF ORGANIZATIONS. IT IS SAID THAT ONE OF EMPLOYEES OF AMEMBASSY IN BEIRUT, JOSEPH KHURI (FY, AMEMBASSY HAS NO EMPLOYEE NAMED JOSEPH KHURI), VISITED OFFICE OF ONE OF REJECTIONIST ORGANIZATIONS TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR AMERICAN COLONEL'S RELEASE. LEBANESE AND AMERICAN AUTHORITIES HAVE IN PRACTICE RESPONDED, BUT WITHOUT ANY OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT, TO DEMANDS." SIMILAR REPORTS ARE CARRIED IN INDEPENDENT "AL-BAYRAQ", LEADING PRO-PLO "AL-MUHARRIR", PRO-LIBYAN "AS-SAFIR", PRO-SYRIAN "ASH-SHARQ" (WHICH ALSO HIGHLIGHTED ALLEGED ROLE OF SAUDI AND ALGERIAN AMBASSADORS IN NEGOTIATIONS), PRO-LIBYAN "AL-KIFAH AL-'ARABI", PRO-FEDAYEEN "AL-LIWA", PRO-EGYPTIAN "AL-YAWM", AND PRO-SOVIET "ASH-SHA'B".

5. DESCRIBING POSSIBLE "SYRIAN FORMULA", INDPENENDT "L'ORIENT-LE JOUR" REPORTS: "ARAB DIPLOMATIC SOURCE AFFIRMED YESTERDAY THAT AMERICAN COLONEL MAY ALREADY BE IN DAMASCUS.... TO SUPPORT THIS THESIS, SAME SOURCES ADDED THAT MISSION OF TWO SYRIAN OFFICERS SENT TO LEBANON THURSDAY NIGHT WAS TO BRING BACK CAPTIVE." HOWEVER, PRO-SYRIAN "ASH-SHARQ" AND OTHER PAPERS PRINT SA'IQA DENIAL OF SUCH REPORTS: "THIS REPORT HAS NO BASIS IN TRUTH. WE EMPHASIZE THAT AUTHORITIES OF SYRIA HAVE NOT INTERVENED

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IN THIS AFFAIR AND HAVE SENT NO ONE TO LEBANON FOR THIS PURPOSE."

6. SEVERAL PAPERS CARRY STATEMENT OF ZUHAIR MUHSIN, HEAD OF MILITARY DEPARTMENT OF PLO, CONDEMNING MORGAN KIDNAPPING: "ON PRINCIPLE, WE DISAPPROVE ANY ACT OF KIDNAPPING TO WHICH ANYONE WITHOUT DIRECT CONNECTION TO CLASHES THAT HAVE OCCURRED IN LEBANON FALLS VICTIM.... BUT IT APPEARS THAT BROTHERS INTO WHOSE HANDS MORGAN HAS FALLEN CONSIDER HIM PRECIOUS CATCH DESERVING OF GREAT HARSHNESS IN ORDER TO OBTAIN SOME MATERIAL GAINS FOR INHABITANTS OF HASLAKH IN EXHCANGE FOR HIS RELEASE.... WE BELIEVE THAT INSISTENCE ON BARTERING MORGAN FOR QUANTITY OF FOODSTUFFS ... HARMS PALESTINIAN REVOLUTION FAR MORE THAN IT HELPS INHABITANTS OF MASLAKH.... WE REGRET THAT QUARTER WHICH

HAS MORGAN IN ITS HANDS CONTINUES TO PROTRACT HIS DETENTION....  
WE HOPE HIS RELEASE WILL BE EXPEDITED." SIMILAR THOUGHTS  
WERE CARRIED ON VOICE OF PALESTINE FROM CAIRO (FBIS LD 112122).

7. "DAILY STAR" REPORTS REJECTION FRONT'S CONTINUING  
CRITICISM OF PLO FOR, ACCORDING TO SPOKESMAN,"WANTING  
TO ESTABLISH GOOD RELATIONS WITH U.S. THROUGH MORGAN CASE."  
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## Message Attributes

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